

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 FRANKF 01772 101549Z

14

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FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FRANKFURT 1772

LIMDIS

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, GW, PO, SP

SUBJ: VISIT OF FRG TRADE UNION OFFICIALS TO SPAIN AND PROTUGAL

1. AS ADDRESSEES ARE PROBABLY AWARE EUGEN LODERER, BOSS OF THE GERMAN METALWORKERS UNION (IG METALL) AND PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS FEDERATION, ACCOMPANIED BY TWO IG METALL OFFICIALS VISITED MADRID AND LISBON FROM FEBRUARY 4 TO 8, 1976. CONSUL GENERAL AND DPO BRIEFLY DISCUSSED VISIT WITH LODERER ON FEBRUARY 24 ALONG WITH OTHER SUBJECTS. ACCOUNT BELOW IS BASED PARTLY ON THE DISCUSSION BUT PRIMARILY ON WRITTEN REPORT WHICH LODERER HAS MADE AVAILABLE TO US AND TRANSLATED COPY OF WHICH WILL BE POUCHED TO ADDRESSEES. (FACT THAT WE HAVE WRITTEN REPORT SHOULD BE TREATED AS NOFORN.)

2. IN MADRID LODERER MET WITH FELIPE GONZALES, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PSOE, NICOLAS REDONDO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UGT AND A VARIETY OF UNNAMED LABOR FUNCTIONARIES. GONZALES WAS CRITICAL
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 FRANKF 01772 101549Z

OF MISLEADING PRESS REPORTING ESPECIALLY AS IT

IMPLIES MUCH GREATER STRENGTH FOR LABOR UNIONS THAN IS THE CASE. FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE RENAULT PLANT WITH 14,000 EMPLOYEES UGT HAS ONLY 16 MEMBERS. GONZALES CONSIDERED ABILITY TO MOBILIZE CROWDS FOR PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION TO BE A FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT YARDSTICK TO MEASURE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF VARIOUS OPPOSITION GROUPS AND CLAIMED THAT IN THIS RESPECT THE PSOE IS FAR SUPERIOR TO THE COMMUNISTS.

3. GONZALES ACCEPTS THAT MINISTER OF INTERIOR TREGA IRIBARNE AND FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA SUPPORT EVOLUTION LOOKING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF A WESTERN-STYLE DEMOCRACY BUT FACE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF CONSIDERABLE VESTED INTERESTS IN STATUS QUO. AS EXAMPLE GONZALES CITES FACT THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRULY FREE TRADE UNION SYSTEM MEETS WITH RESISTANCE FROM SOME 150,000 MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT-RUN SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION WHOSE VESTED INTEREST IS IN ITS MAINTENANCE OR IN A TRANSITION WHICH WOULD PRESERVE THOSE INTERESTS.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPANISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT WAS ALSO DISCUSSED BY LODERER WITH UNNAMED REPRESENTATIVE OF STATE SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION WHO CONFIRMED AREILZA'S STATEMENT (PARA 8) THAT TIMETABLE CALLED FOR DECISION IN APRIL THIS YEAR ON FORMATION OF INDEPENDENT WORKER/EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS AND ADDED THAT WORKER/EMPLOYEE CONGRESS IS TO TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER TO INCLUDE PARTICIPATION OF ORGANIZATIONS NOW OPERATING ILLEGALLY. AT THIS CONGRESS DECISION IS TO BE REACHED WHETHER TO GO FOR A SINGLE LABOR UNION FEDERATION OR FOR A PLURALISTIC LABOR UNION STRUCTURE. ASKED FOR HIS OPINION LODERER SAID HE FAVORED A UNIFIED LABOR UNION SYSTEM BUT ONLY ON BASIS OF FREE CHOICE BY MEMBERS AND NOT BY FIAT FROM ABOVE. LODERER IS CONCERNED HOWEVER THAT LONGSTANDING EFFORTS BY THE COMMUNISTS TO PENETRATE THE SYNDICAL APPARATUS POSE A DANGER OF A REPETITION OF THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 FRANKF 01772 101549Z

PORTUGUESE EXPERIENCE. HE THEREFORE BELIEVES IT IMPORTANT THAT NON-COMMUNIST TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS AND ESPECIALLY THE UGT BE LEGALIZED BEFORE A DECISION IS REACHED ON QUESTION OF A UNIFIED LABOR UNION FEDERATION VERSUS A PLURALISTIC SYSTEM OF INDEPENDENT UNIONS.

5. LODERER SAID THAT HE HAD ADVISED SPANISH

LAOR LEADERS TO PROCEED CAREFULLY AND GONZALES SAID THAT THE UGT AND PSOE WANTED TO ACT RESPONSIBLY AND TO AVOID BLIND ACTIVISM FOR ITS OWN SAKE. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE SPANISH PEOPLE ENJOY A RELATIVELY HIGH LIVING STANDARD AND DO NOT WANT A PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION. TO A DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT WAVE OF STRIKES REDONDO ADDED THAT IN SOME CASES THE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS HAD LOST CONTROL OF THE SITUATION WHICH POSED SOME OBVIOUS DANGERS.

6. IN DESCRIBING THE POSITION OF THE OPPOSITION GONZALES SAID THE POLITICAL LEFT HAS THE STRENGTH TO INFLUENCE AND MODIFY THE POLITICAL PROCESS BUT NOT YET THE STRENGTH TO TAKE POWER FROM THE RIGHT. HE DESCRIBED THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF THE OPPOSITION AS FORCING THE GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH A TIMETABLE FOR CHANGE, PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF WHICH ARE A) ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES, B) ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE AND INDEPENDENT UNIONS, C) FAR-REACHING AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS AND D) DISSOLUTION OF SPECIAL COURTS.

7. GONZALES CONSIDERS POSSIBILITY OF A MILITARY TAKEOVER AS REMOTE BUT CONCEIVABLE IF THE THE POLITICAL CONFRONTATION WERE TO BECOME SO SHARP AND DANGEROUS AS TO CONVINCE THE MODERATE CONSERVATIVE PART OF THE ARMY THAT MILITARY INTERVENTION IS UNAVOIDABLE.

8. LODERER ACCOMPANIED BY GERMAN AMBASSADOR ALSO MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA WHOM HE DESCRIBED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 FRANKF 01772 101549Z

AS VERY FRANK AND FORTHCOMING. AREILZA LISTED HIS PRIORITIES AS A) LEGALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, B) CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND C) "RESTITUTION" (COMMENT: WE ARE NOT SURE WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS). AREILZA SAID 1977 WOULD BE THE YEAR FOR GENERAL FREE ELECTION TO A PARLIAMENT OF ABOUT 500 DEPUTIES. HE THOUGHT IT DESIRABLE TO HOLD DOWN THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF A MINIMUM OF FIVE PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE AS A REQUIREMENT FOR PARTY STATUS. HE ADDED THAT BY SUMMER ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS NOT GUILTY OF CRIMINAL ACTS WOULD BE RELEASED. THE LAW ON SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE CHANGED IN THE COURSE OF 1976 TO FACILITATE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT WORKER/EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER

ORGANIZATIONS. IN THE WORKERS' ORGANIZATION THERE SHOULD BE ROOM FOR THE UNIONS OF UGT, THE USO AND THE COMMISSIONES OBERERAS. ALREILZA ASKED LODERER NOT REPEAT NOT TO MAKE PULBIC FOREGOING SPECIFICS.

9. IN PORTUGAL THE GERMAN MET WITH A NUMBER OF SOCIALIST METALWORKER FUNCTIONARIES PRIMARILY TO DISCUSS REASONS WHY COMMUNISTS HAD BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL IN ESTABLISHING INFLUENCE AND CONTROL IN THE PORTUGUESE LABOR MOVEMENT. LODERER AND COLLEAGUES ALSO MET WITH MARIO SOARES WHO REJECTED THE NOTION THAT THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL WOULD INEVITABLY BE TOWARD THE RIGHT. SOARES EXPECTS THE SOCIALISTS TO GARNER A MINIMUM OF 35 PERCENT AND POSSIBLY 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION. HE SAID HIS MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO PREVENT THE PPD AND CTS FROM JOINTLY OBTAINING MORE THE 50 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. LEHMANN

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